

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of Claims will replace all prior revisions and listings of Claims in the application:

Claims 1- 4 (Canceled).

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): A surgical access device for permitting access to body tissue, which comprises:

an access member dimensioned for introduction into body tissue, the access member defining a longitudinal axis and having a longitudinal passage to permit introduction of an object; and

a seal comprising a fabric material and being disposed within the access member, the seal having inner portions defining an aperture extending therethrough adapted to expand from ~~an initial~~ a first open condition in a relaxed state of the seal to an expanded second open condition in a stressed state of the seal upon passage of the object in substantial sealed relation therewith, the seal having a general tapered portion in the relaxed state thereof.

Claim 6 (Withdrawn): The surgical access device according to claim 5 wherein the seal is a septum seal.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): The surgical access device according to claim 5 wherein the seal is elongated when in the relaxed state thereof and extends along the longitudinal axis of the access member.

Claim 8 (Withdrawn): The surgical access device according to claim 7 wherein the seal defines a general hourglass configuration.

Claim 9 (Previously Presented): The surgical access device according to claim 7 wherein the tapered portion of the seal defines a general conical configuration.

Claim 10 (Previously Presented): The surgical access device according to claim 5 wherein the seal includes an outer layer of an elastomeric material.

Claims 11 – 21 (Canceled).

Claim 22 (Previously Presented): The surgical access device according to claim 5 wherein the inner portions of the seal are dimensioned to form a substantial sealed relation with a surgical instrument introduced within the aperture.

Claim 23 (Canceled).

Claim 24 (Currently Amended): A surgical access device, which comprises:
an access member dimensioned for insertion into body tissue to provide access through the body tissue and to an underlying surgical site, the access member defining a longitudinal axis and having a throughbore to permit passage of an object toward the surgical site; and

a seal comprising a fabric material and being disposed relative to the access member, the seal including a general tapered portion and having inner portions defining an open passage in a relaxed state of the seal adapted to permit passage of the object and to expand when in a stressed state of the seal in the presence of the object to form a substantial sealed relation with the object.

Claim 25 (Previously Presented): The surgical access device according to claim 24 wherein the seal includes an elastomeric material.

Claim 26 (Currently Amended): The surgical ~~seal-assembly~~ access device according to claim 25 wherein the fabric material of the seal is at least partially embedded in the elastomeric material of the seal.

Claim 27 (Canceled).

Claim 28 (Currently Amended): The surgical access device according to ~~Claim~~ claim 5 wherein the seal includes a resilient material.

Claim 29 (Previously Presented): The surgical access device according to claim 28 wherein the fabric material comprises a layer of fabric material.

Claim 30 (Previously Presented): The surgical access device according to claim 29 wherein a layer of fabric material is disposed on each of opposed surfaces of the resilient material.

Claim 31 (Withdrawn): The surgical access device according to claim 28 wherein the resilient material comprises at least two layers of resilient material and the fabric material comprises at least one layer of fabric material at least partially disposed between the at least two layers of resilient material.

Claim 32 (New): The surgical access device according to claim 5 wherein the seal is non inflatable.

Claim 33 (New): The surgical access device according to claim 24 wherein the seal is non inflatable.